The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers / L'Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

CASLT/ACPLS

ONTARIO SCHOOLS WILL PILOT INTENSIVE CORE FRENCH CLASSES

NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, February 26, 2007 — Four Ontario school boards have received funding to pilot Intensive Core French classes starting in September 2007. The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, the Niagara Catholic District School Board, and the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario will implement this new research-based approach to teaching French in selected schools.

The Intensive Core French program currently being implemented across Canada is gaining popularity for its innovative approach in helping students become more fluent in French. The program is essentially an enriched Core French program, which relies on literacy-based strategies and increases the intensity and amount of time spent on learning French for five months of a school year. During this period of intensive exposure to French, students receive three to four times the number of hours of instruction normally devoted to French. In Ontario, students will undertake this program in grade 5 or grade 6.

Research from the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers' (CASLT) 2005 report, *An Examination of Intensive French: A Pedagogical Strategy for the Improvement of French as a Second Language Outcomes in Canada* (A. MacFarlane), has shown that after five months of Intensive Core French, students at the grade 5 or grade 6 level can communicate as well as students who have followed the regular Core French program up until grade 9 or grade 10. These same students also scored as well or better on English Language Arts measures of achievement than students who were not involved in the Intensive French classes. Intensive Core French thus offers an interesting alternative to current Core French programs.

The program initially started as a three-year research project undertaken by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. As a result of its success and popularity with parents and students alike, the program is now used in eight provinces and two territories. Currently, over 3,000 students in 125 classes are involved in such pilot programs, with both Newfoundland and Labrador and the Province of New Brunswick exploring Intensive Core French as a standard component of all Core French programs.

Monika Ferenczy, President of the Ontario branch of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) is thrilled with the news. "CPF-Ontario has followed this initiative for two years. The next step for us is to support the teachers and parents of those students who will be involved in the pilot classes. This summer, Glendon College in Toronto will host a CASLT Teacher Training Symposium and Information Session for administrators interested in starting an Intensive Core French program in Ontario. We are hoping to foster more interest in the program. The fact that the Ministry of Education approved pilot project funding is a good indicator that it is looking at alternative Core French options in Ontario."

Miles Turnbull, President of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), echoes her enthusiasm. "CASLT is very pleased that Ontario has come on board with this program. We are dedicated to supporting the implementation of Intensive French as an innovative tool for revitalizing Core French programs, and we look forward to working with the teachers and administrators who are committed to enhancing students' skills in French as a second language, in Ontario."

CASLT coordinates and supports, in various provinces, four different summer in-service sessions for Intensive Core French teachers and administrators, such as the symposium for new Intensive Core French teachers and the information session for administrators to be held at Glendon College in Toronto.

For more information on the Intensive Core French program, visit www.caslt.org. The website offers classroom resources for teachers, background and research information on the program, and upcoming information on teacher training sessions and workshops.

Established, in 1970, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) increases awareness, appreciation and understanding of the importance of second language learning and teaching throughout Canada and promotes the advancement of professional excellence among language educators.

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